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MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

VOL. XXIII.

BALTIMORE, FEBRUARY, 1908.

No. 2.

THE MIGRATIONS OF A SONNET.

However boresome to the casual reader may be the English literature of the sixteenth century, to the scholar it offers a fascinating study. In an age without copy-right "Je prends mon bien là où je le trouve" was the literary credo, and every poem becomes a problem. Today no one would consider appropriating Carducci's poems; then Petrarch was rewritten for the English public,—and it was not thought necessary to allude to Petrarch. Nor was Petrarch the only victim. The whole body of contemporary Italian poetry was laid under contribution. When one remembers this, æsthetic comments on a poem are accompanied with paralyzing doubts whether the English writer be the author of the poetic idea, or only of the English expression of that idea; when one forgets this, internal criticism becomes truly creative, and biographical inference more startling than true. The romantic love of Wyatt for Queen Anne, or of Surrey for his Geraldine, are showing signs of wear. When the impassioned lament is proved to be nothing but a mediocre translation from a foreign original, a damper falls on the eager theorist. But the number of Italian poets is legion, and the English readers but few. Let the theorist now rejoice since only here and there are we able as yet to show conclusively the mode of procedure.

Fortunately in the following sequence of sonnets the way is comparatively simple. In Tottel's *Miscellany* (1557), fifteen years after Wyatt's death, credited to Wyatt this sonnet appeared:

"Like to these unmesurable montayns
is my painful lyff, the burden of ire:
for of great height be they, & high is my desire;
and I, of teres, and they be full of fontayns.
Under craggy rockes they have full barren playns;
herd thoughtes in me my wofull mynde doeth tyre.

Small fruyt & many leves their toppes do atyre;
small effect with great trust in me remayns.
The boysteus wyndes oft their high bowghes do blast;
hote sighes from me continually be shed.
Cattell, in them; and in me, love is fed.
Immoveable ame I; and they are full stedfast.
Of the restless birdes they have the tone and note;
and I, alwayes plaintes that passe thorough my throte."¹

The heading,² "The louers life compared to the Alpes," seems to indicate a foreign origin. Still more so is the comment in the *Arte of English Poetry*, commonly attributed to Puttenham;³ "and specially in the rimes of Sir Thomas Wiatt, strained perchaunce out of their originall, made first by Francis Petrarcha; as these . . ." and the first lines of this sonnet are quoted. But the ambiguity lies in the phrase "as these." If these lines serve only as an illustration to his previous remarks on scansion,—and this seems to be indicated by the punctuation,—the statement remains true that many of Wyatt's verses are imitated from Petrarch. If on the other hand the author means that this sonnet is imitated from Petrarch, he is in error as was pointed out as long ago as 1816 by Nott:⁴ "He speaks of it as if he considered it translated from Petrarch. This is, I believe, a mistake; though it was probably borrowed from some Italian writer Tibaldeo or Accolti." Prof. Koeppe⁵ on his side finds the original in a similar sonnet by Melin de Saint-Gelais (1487-1558). In thus attributing it he is followed by Mr. Sidney Lee⁶

¹ This reading is drawn from Padelford's *Early Sixteenth Century Lyrics*, Heath & Co., 1907. Collated with Wyatt's own manuscript, it varies widely from the Tottel version. In thus giving us the actual text, Prof. Padelford has made all students of this period his debtors.

² Tottel's *Miscellany*, Arber's Reprints, p. 70.

³ Puttenham's *Arte of English Poetrie*, Arber's Reprints, p. 142.

⁴ *Works of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, London, 1816, p. 548.

⁵ Emil Koeppe, "Sir Thomas Wyatt und Melin de Saint-Gelais," *Anglia*, xiii, 17.

⁶ *An English Garner. Elizabethan Sonnets*. Introduction by Sidney Lee. New York, n. d. vol. I, p. xxxii.

and, with some reservations, by Prof. Padelford (pp. 111-112).

Actually, however, Wyatt's sonnet is a literal translation from one by Sannazaro (1458-1530):⁷

"Simile a questi smisurati monti
E l'aspra vita mia colma di doglie,
Alti sone questi, ed alte le mie voglie:
Di lagrime abbond'io, questi di fonti.
Lor han di scogli le superbe fronti,
In me duri pensier l'anima accoglie;
Lor son pochi frutti, e molti foglie,
I'ho pochi effetti a gran speranza aggiunti.
Soffian sempre fra lor rabbiosi venti,
In me gravi sospiri esito fanno;
In me si pasce Amore, in lor armenti.
Immobile son io, lor fermi atonno:
Lor han di vaghi augelli dolci accenti,
Ed io lamenti di soverchio affanno."

Fortunately here we have definite dates. It first appears in 1531.⁸ There are, then, three

⁷ *Le Opere Volgari di M. Jacopo Sannazaro*. In Padova, 1723, Pt. 3, Son. 3. I take pleasure in acknowledging the courtesy of the Harvard Librarians who gave me access to this copy. Thru the kindness of Prof. J. G. Robertson of Harrow, as this article goes to press, I am enabled to acknowledge the priority of Mr. Arthur Tilley on this point. *Mod. Lang. Quarterly*, Vol. 5, p. 149.

⁸ This sonnet is to be found in the third part "aggiunta, dal suo proprio originale cauata, con somma diligenza corretta, & stampata" per Nicolo d'Aristotle detto Zoppino, mxxxxj.

In the following bibliography of the Rime this distinguishing feature, the third part, is omitted unless otherwise stated.

In Napoli per Maistro Johannes Sultzbach, 1530.

In Roma per Antonio Blado d'Asola, 1530. (Taken from Vaganay.)

In Venetia per Alexandro Paganino, 1531. (Not in Vaganay.)

No place, per Nicolo d'Aristotle detto Zoppino; third part, 1531. (Not in Vaganay.)

No place, per Marchio Sessa, 1532; third part.

No place, per Bern. Giunto, 1533 (reprinted 1723); third part.

In Vinegia, nelle case delli heredi d'Aldo Romano, 1534. (Taken from Vaganay.)

In Venetia appresso Gabriel Gioli di Ferrarii, 1543. (Third part specifically omitted.)

In Venetia, no publisher, 1544. (Third part specifically omitted. Not in Vaganay.)

In Vinegia appresso Gabriele Giolito de Ferrari, 1549. (Not in Vaganay.)

assumptions open to us. First, as we know nothing of the dates of composition, Wyatt's sonnet may be the original. This, I think, is disproved by the superior workmanship of the Italian. Secondly, as we know that Wyatt was in Rome probably in 1526,⁹ there he may have seen the sonnet circulating in manuscript, or in the hands of its author who had come up from Naples, or he may have gone down to Naples to see Sannazaro. While this is possible, there are too many unsupported assertions to make it probable. Or thirdly, Wyatt may have seen the Zoppino edition, or some commonplace book, or compilation, in which it was copied. This last is the most probable solution. But in this case, then, Wyatt must have been almost thirty years old, and as he only lived to be thirty-nine, Prof. Padelford's comment (p. 112), "the rough metre of Wyatt's poem shows that it was one of his early compositions," should be modified. As the matter stands now, the dating is probably after 1531.

The importance of the dating of the Wyatt sonnet becomes apparent when the Saint-Gelais¹⁰ poem is considered.

"Voyant ces monts de veue ainsi lointaine,
Je les compare à mon long déplaisir:
Haut est leur chef, et haut est mon désir:
Leur pied est ferme, et ma foy est certaine.
D'eux maint ruisseau coule, et mainte fontaine:
De mes deux yeux sortent pleurs à loisir;
De forts souspirs ne me puis dessaisir,
Et de grands vents leur cime est toute plaine,
Mille troupeaux s'y promènent et paissent,
Autant d'Amours se couvent et renaissent
Dedans mon cœur, qui seul est leur pasture.
Ils sont sans fruit, mon bien n'est qu'aparence,
Et d'eux à moy n'a qu'une difference,
Qu'en eux la neige, en moy la flamme dure."

As this is obviously a translation, Blanche-

In Vinegia ed. by Dolce, Giolito de'Ferrari. (Taken from Vaganay.)

In Venetia ed. Dolce, appresso Christoforo Zanetti, 1574.

In Venetia, Appresso Nicolo Moretti, 1597. (Taken from Vaganay.)

⁹ John Bruce, *Gentleman's Magazine*, September, 1850, p. 258.

¹⁰ *Oeuvres Complètes de Melin de Saint-Gelais*, par Prosper Blanchemain, Paris, 1873, p. 78.

main's note stating from internal evidence that the date is 1536 may be disregarded. But according to him,¹¹ it appears in a volume published in 1547, five years after Wyatt's death and ten years before the first publication of his poems. Consequently the question at once arises, from which one is it a translation? Sig. Torraca,¹² not knowing the Wyatt, thinks it a modification of the Italian. Prof. Koepfel, Mr. Lee, and Prof. Padelford, not knowing the Italian, think it the original. Mr. Lee, in particular, states the case clearly; "Nor did Wyatt altogether neglect French literature. He translated with verbal accuracy a popular sonnet of Melin de Saint-Gelais." A footnote refers to this sonnet. But on either side there is no verbal accuracy here. Nor did Wyatt translate from the French because his version is far more accurate a rendition of the Italian than the Saint-Gelais. Nor did the Italian translate from the French as it is more condensed. To account for the Saint-Gelais, there are two possibilities. The first is that both poets translated it independently; the second, that Saint-Gelais translated from Wyatt. But with the three poems before us, a decision is possible. Owing to the difficulty of the rime-scheme, it was impossible for Wyatt to render the Italian absolutely literally, in as condensed a form. But then if his additions are followed by Saint-Gelais, the latter is the translator. On comparing the two, the first peculiarity is that in the octave the riming sounds are similar. Whereas the Italian runs *monti-doglie-voglie-fonti*, Wyatt has *montayns-ire-desire-fontayns*, and Saint-Gelais, *lontaine-deplaisir-désir-certaine*. If a coincidence, it is surely a curious one. The last half of the third line of the Wyatt reads "& high is my desire"; of the Saint-Gelais, "*et haut est mon désir*." The "*fra lor*" in the ninth line of the Sannazaro is ambiguous; it may refer to either the mountains or the trees. Wyatt takes the latter: "The boysteous wyndes of their high bowghs do blast." With this line in mind, Saint-Ge-

lais translates "high bowghs" accurately by "cime," but his "leur" then has no noun on which to depend except "monts." Consequently his line is almost nonsense, because a mountain top cannot be very full of strong winds. In the tenth line to fill up the measure, Wyatt inserts "continually." This idea is given by Saint-Gelais, "*De forts souspirs ne me puis dessaisir*." However trifling these examples may seem, the great fact is that there is not one word common to the Italian and the French which is not in the English, and that some of the English variants are followed by the French. The supposition then is that when Wyatt was at the Court of Francis the First in December, 1539 and January, 1540, he there met Saint-Gelais who was attached to the Court. And the deduction from all this is not trifling. The unbiased assumption that much of our early sixteenth century literature has been translated from the French is so common that it is time to call a halt. At least definite proof should be offered.

But that this position is not tenable with the literature of the last half of the sixteenth century may be shown by a further example drawn from the history of this same sonnet. With every translation so far there has been a steady progress away from the original. The exigencies of the rime-scheme forced even Wyatt to additions; his last phrase is pitifully weak. But the last verses of the Saint-Gelais,

"Et d'eux à moy n'a qu'une difference,
Qu'en eux la neige, en moy la flamme dure."

however Petrarchistic may be the antithesis, have no parallel in either of the others. But this conceit, admired by Barnes, indicates the source of his twelfth madrigal.¹³

"Like to the mountains, are my high desires ;

Level to thy love's highest point :

Grounded on faith, which thy sweet grace requires,

For Springs, tears rise in endless source.

For Summer's flowers, Love's fancies I appoint.

The Trees, with storms tossed out of course,

Figure my thoughts, still blasted with Despair.

Thunder, lightning, and hail

Make his trees mourn : thy frowns make me bewail !

This only difference ! Here, fire ; there, snows are !"

¹¹ This edition, however, is ignored by Vaganay, *Le Sonnet en Italie et en France au XVI^e Siècle*, Lyon, 1902.

¹² *Gl' Imitatori Stranieri di Jacopo Sannazaro, di Francesco Torraca*, Roma, 1882.

¹³ *Elizabethan Sonnets*, vol. 1, p. 201.

Here there is nothing save the first comparison to suggest the remote Sannazaro. There has been a gradual progress from the precise epithet to the general one. Rabbiosi venti—boysteous wyndes—grands vents—storms. The interval between the two still recognizable comparisons of the first and last lines is filled with the refuse from a sonneteer's note book. Such work as this explains Shakespeare's contemporary references to "sonnets."

After this there is no need of following it further. Torraca cites a verse from Desportes where there is some similarity. But in the verse from the *Phoenix Nest* quoted by Nott and the stanzas from Tofte's *Alba* quoted by Prof. Koepfel, the adulteration has passed into the stage of Petrarchismo. Sannazaro's sonnet has been absorbed into general literature. Thus this sonnet sequence forms a curious chapter in literary history. One is tempted to ask the Sadducees' question, "whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her." And thus Barnes' poem, an English translation of a French translation of an English translation of an Italian original, shows in a marked degree the intermingling of the three literatures.

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GRAISSER LA PATTE.

The locution *oindre la paume* appears in a fabliau *La vieille qui oint la paume au chevalier*¹ and in the many variations of this or similar stories current in the XIIIth-XIVth centuries.² An example occurs in the *Roman de Carité*³ str.

¹ Montaiglon et Raynaud, *Recueil gén. des Fabl.*, v, 157-159; *Hist. Litt. de la Fr.*, xxiii, 168-169.

² For bibliography see Oesterley, *Schimpf und Ernst* (Pauli) 124, note; Crane, *Exempla of Jacques de Vitry*, xxxviii, note; Bédier, *Les Fabliaux*, 283, and sub *La Vieille qui oint*. I can add only *Carité*, xiii-xix, cited below. For the locution cf. Grimm s. v. *schmieren*; Alberti, *Voc. della Ling. It.*, s. v. *ugnere*; Salva, s. v. *untar*.

³ Renclus de Moliens, ed. Van Hamel, Paris, 1885.

XIII-XIX: an old woman with a case in court is unable to secure counsel. She is told that to obtain a lawyer's assistance she must 'anoint his palm.' Interpreting to the letter, she procures lard, approaches a *plaideour* and surprises him with the unexpected revenue. This version by the Renclus is interesting because the language in which it is cast throws light on the semasiological development of the locution. The passages showing the phrase read:

xiii, vv. 10-12: Chil sont de conseil assené
Ki font a lor mains oignement;
Et chil ki nes oignent noient.

xvi, vv. 8-11: Chil hom aidier pas ne s'aloigne
Chelui ki le paume li oint.
Il a apris ke on li oigne;
Oing li, si fera te besoigne.

xvii, vv. 11-12: Car vous m'aideriez chou dist
Se je le paume vous oignoie.

The idiom here appears in three forms: *faire oignement aus mains de*, *oindre le (la) paume* and *oindre*. It is a question, therefore, of the semantics of *oindre* (cf. Ger. *schmieren*); *main* and *paume* are purely expletive designating the part 'anointed' in receiving the bribe.

The Spanish use the expression *no andar el carro* indicating delay in the execution of a project. Accordingly they say *untar el carro*,⁴ 'to expedite an affair,' 'to bribe.' A similar mental process existed we think in *oindre (la paume)*. We are close to this development in *Car.* xvi, v. 11: "Oing li, si fera te besoigne."⁵ But going on it becomes clearer that we are dealing with this tacitly understood analogy. For the Renclus in applying the story of the old woman to the Romans says in XVIII-XIX:

Romains a langue seke et dure,
Ne puet parler sans oignement;
Et ses huis siet tant sekement⁶

⁴ Salva, s. v. *carro*.

⁵ A similar sense of *oindre* appears in Montaigne (*Litré*), *Essais*, 11, 85: "Heureux qui se treuve à point pour *oindre leur volonté* sur ce passage."

⁶ Grimm cites Logau, III, 45-47:

Man muss mit *schmieren*
Wie durren thüren
So advocaten
Zum meisten rathen.
Sollen schweigen thüren
Sie reden führen.

⁷ Grease persuades a door to be silent, a lawyer to talk.'